

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-15, and 17-20 are pending in the application, with 1, 13-14, 17, 18 and 20 being the independent claims. Claim 16 is cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Objection to the Specification

The Examiner objected to paragraph 031 of the specification because reference numbers "186" and "184" were incorrect and should have been reference numbers --286-- and --284--, respectively. Applicant has made the necessary correction to the specification as noted above in the amendment of paragraph 031.

Further, Applicant has amended paragraph 027 to correct a technical inconsistency that was found during a review of the specification. No new matter was added by this amendment and support for the amendment is found throughout the specification.

Objections to the Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings because they failed to comply with 37 C.F.R. 1.84(p)(5) for not including the reference number "100" that was mentioned in the specification in paragraph 023. Applicant submits herewith replacement figures 3-8 correcting this error and addressing other inconsistencies found during a review of the

drawings. Six (6) sheets of Replacement Drawings and six (6) sheets of Annotated Drawings Showing Changes are submitted herewith. No new matter has been added by these amendments and support for these amendments is found throughout the specification.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 13, and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) (sic, 102(b))¹ as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,011,646 to Bertschi. The Examiner states that "Bertschi discloses a first gate assembly 53 coupled to an outlet of a first sprue bar element 42, a second gate assembly 52 coupled to an inlet of a second sprue bar element 43, wherein the inlet of said second sprue bar element 43 receives a melt stream of moldable material from the outlet of said first sprue bar element when said gate assemblies are moved from a first position shown in Fig. 2 to a second position when the inlet and outlet are aligned as shown in Fig. 1."

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's characterization of the disclosure of the Bertschi patent. The Bertschi patent discloses that a movable sprue bar 43 "is guided into location [with a first hot runner system 41] by sprue bar ramp 52 acting on first manifold ramp 53 on guide block 54." Bertschi Patent, col. 4, lines 49-51; FIGS. 1 and 2. As such, the Bertschi patent does not teach or suggest first and second gate assemblies as claimed in independent claims 13, 17, 18 and 20.

¹U.S. Patent No. 5,011,646 is the only Bertschi patent Applicant is aware of and this patent was previously submitted in Applicant's IDS. The '646 patent is a 102(b) reference to the above-referenced application. Although the Examiner indicated that a Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) was attached, Applicant did not receive such Notice.

Applicant has amended independent claims 13, 17, 18 and 20 to better define the invention thereof.

- Independent claim 13 has been amended to recite that each of the first and second gate assemblies includes "a movable cover means" that are movable to "an open position such that said inlet [of said second sprue bar element] and said outlet [of said first sprue bar element] are aligned." Such a movable cover means is not disclosed or suggested by the sprue bar and manifold ramp assembly of the Bertschi patent, and as such claim 13 is patentable over the Bertschi patent for at least this reason.
- Independent claim 17 has been amended to recite that the "first gate assembly is movable to cover said outlet of said first sprue channel and said second gate assembly is movable to cover said inlet of said second sprue channel to restrict the flow of melt from said first sprue channel and said second sprue channel when said second sprue bar element moves from the first position to the second position." The Bertschi patent does not teach or suggest that sprue bar ramp (52) is movable to cover an inlet of movable sprue bar (43) or that first manifold ramp (53) is movable to cover an outlet of first runner system (41), and as such claim 17 is patentable over the Bertschi patent for at least this reason.
- Independent claim 18 has been amended to recite that the first gate assembly is "slidingly movable from a first position wherein said first gate assembly does not obstruct said outlet to a second position wherein said first gate assembly obstructs said outlet [and that the] second gate

assembly [is] slidingly movable from a first position wherein said second gate assembly does not obstruct said inlet to a second position wherein said gate assembly obstructs said inlet." The Bertschi patent does not teach or suggest that sprue bar ramp (52) is slidingly movable to obstruct an inlet of movable sprue bar (43) or that first manifold ramp (53) is slidingly movable to obstruct an outlet of first runner system (41), and as such independent claim 18 and claim 19 which depends therefrom are patentable over the Bertschi patent for at least this reason.

- Independent claim 20 has been amended to recite that the "first gate assembly [is] movable relative to said outlet of said first sprue channel [to which it is coupled] from a first position to a second position [and that the] second gate assembly [is] movable relative to said inlet of said second sprue channel [to which it is coupled] from a first position to a second position." The Bertschi patent does not teach or suggest that sprue bar ramp (52) is movable relative to an inlet of movable sprue bar (43) or that first manifold ramp (53) is movable relative to an outlet of first runner system (41), and as such claim 20 is patentable over the Bertschi patent for at least this reason.

Allowed Claims 1-12 and 14-16

Applicant acknowledges the Examiner's indicated allowance of claims 1-12 and 14-16. Applicant has made minor amendments to claims 3, 4-7, 9, 11 and 12 that depend from allowed independent claim 1. These changes do not effect the allowability thereof. Applicant has also amended claim 15 to include the content of dependent claim 16 to

better define the invention thereof, and claim 16 has been cancelled. This change also should not effect the Examiner's indication of allowance thereof.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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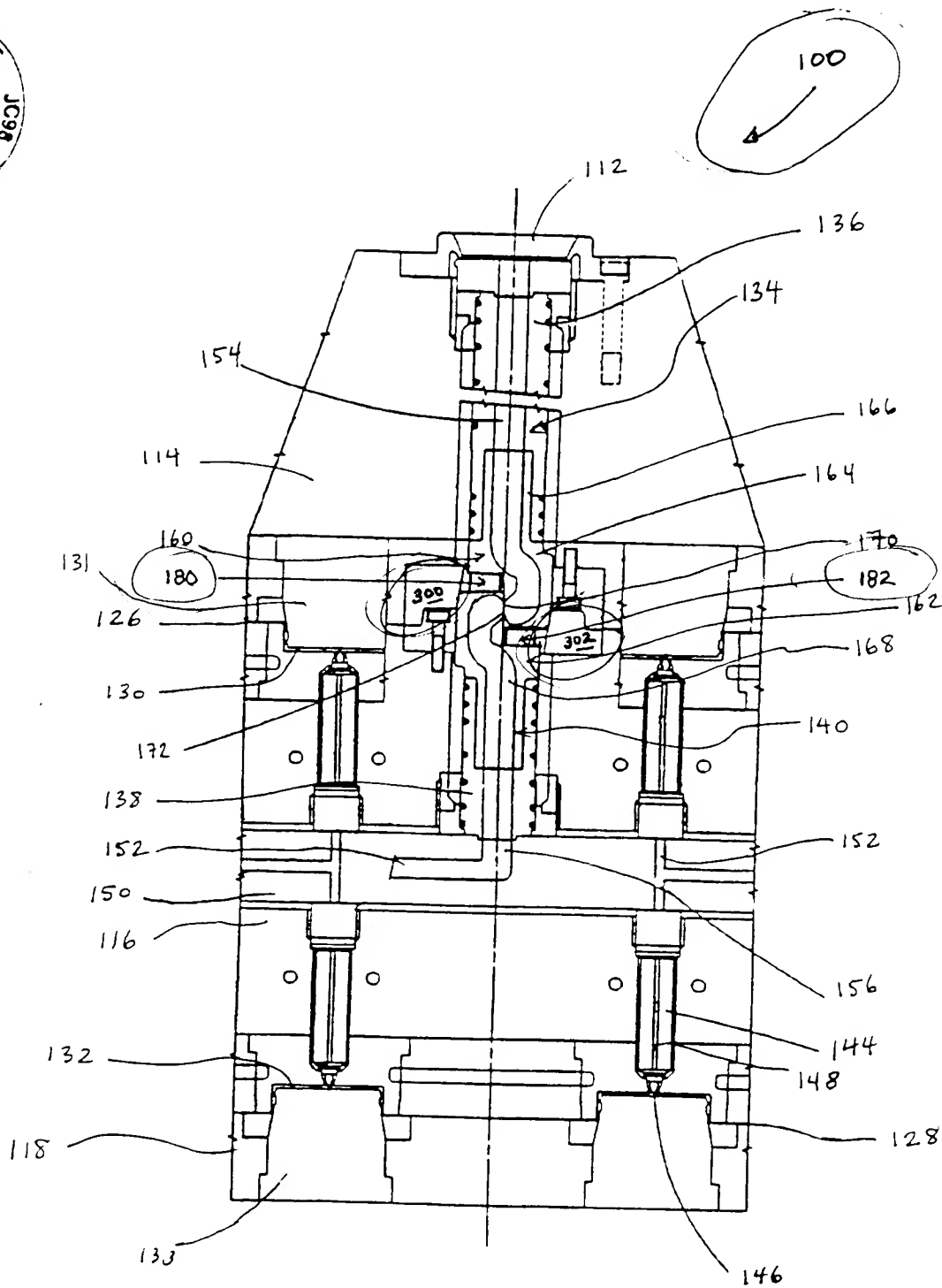


Figure 3

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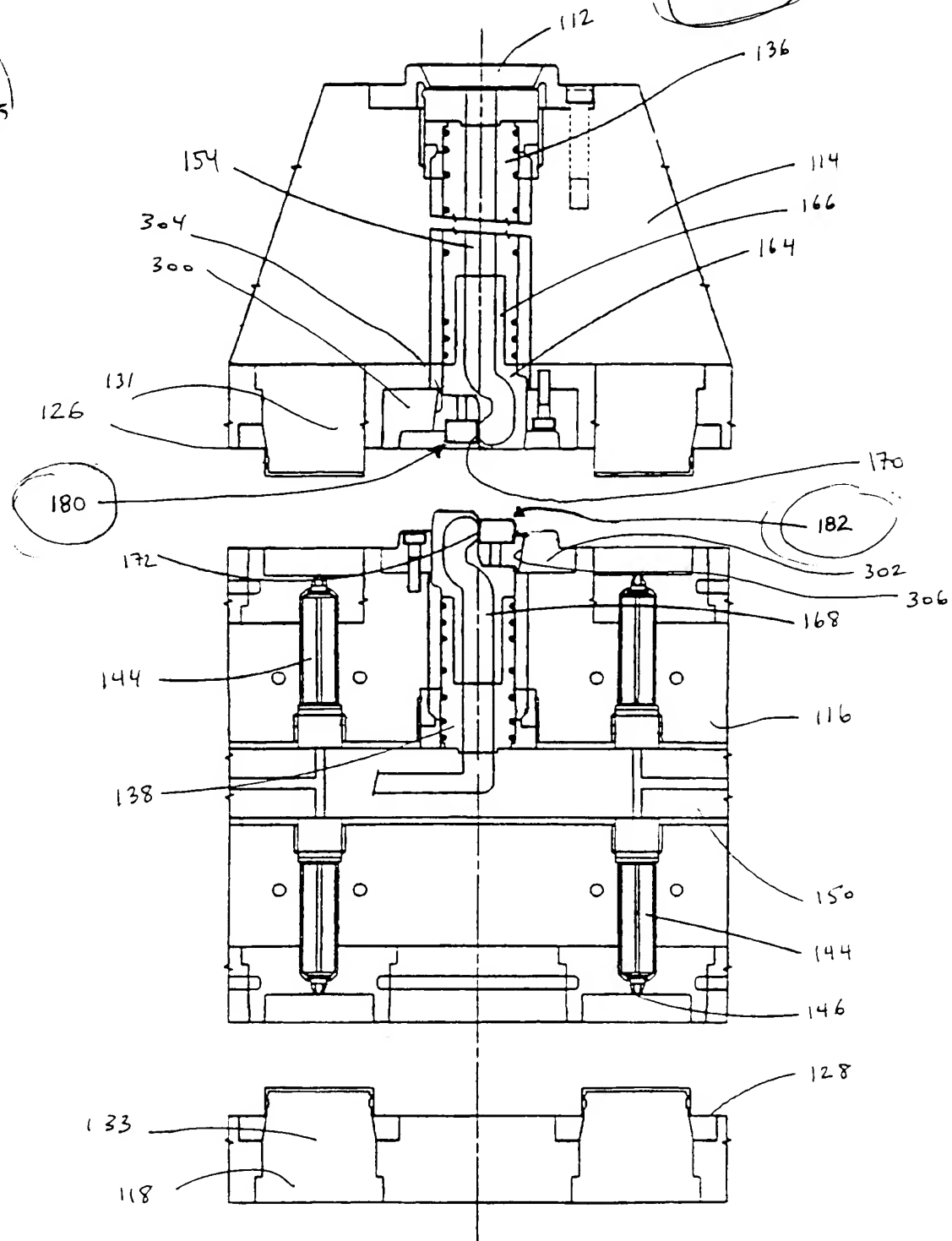


Figure 4

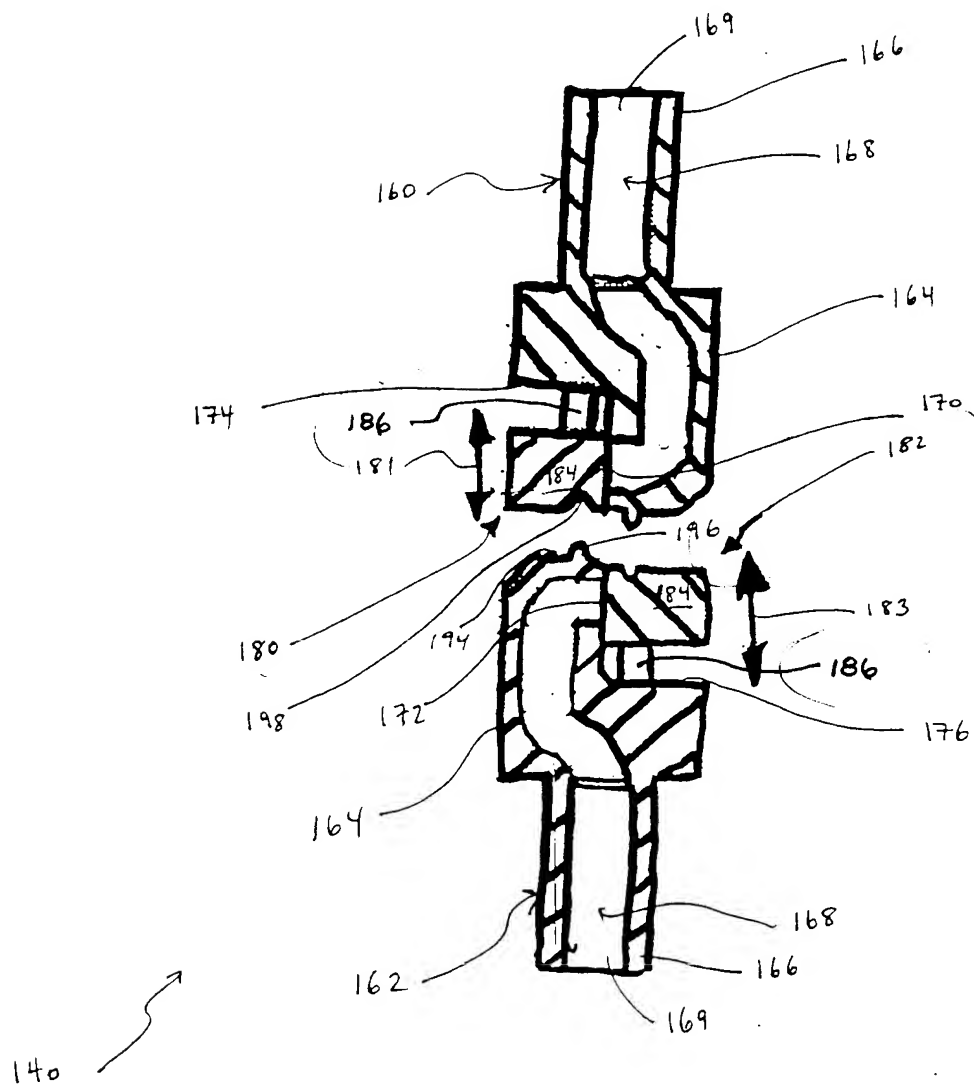


Figure 5

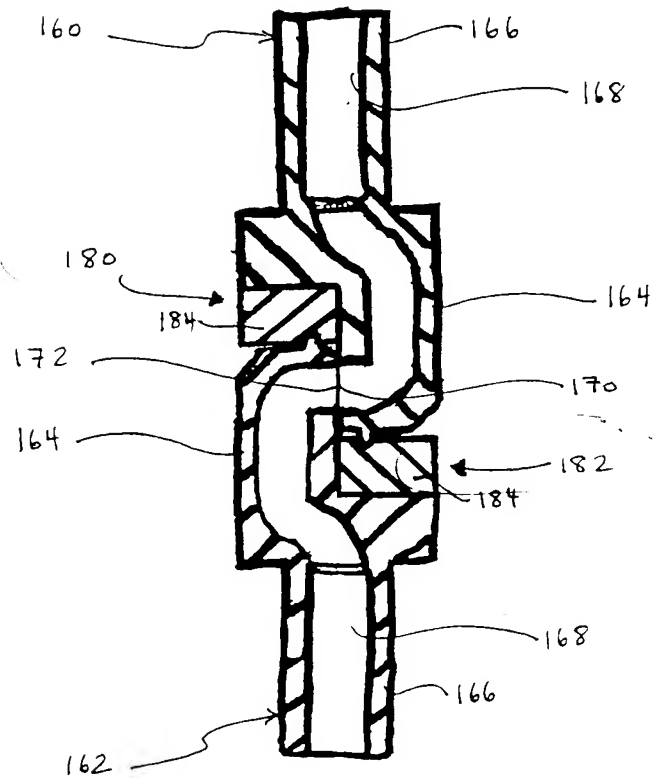



Figure 6

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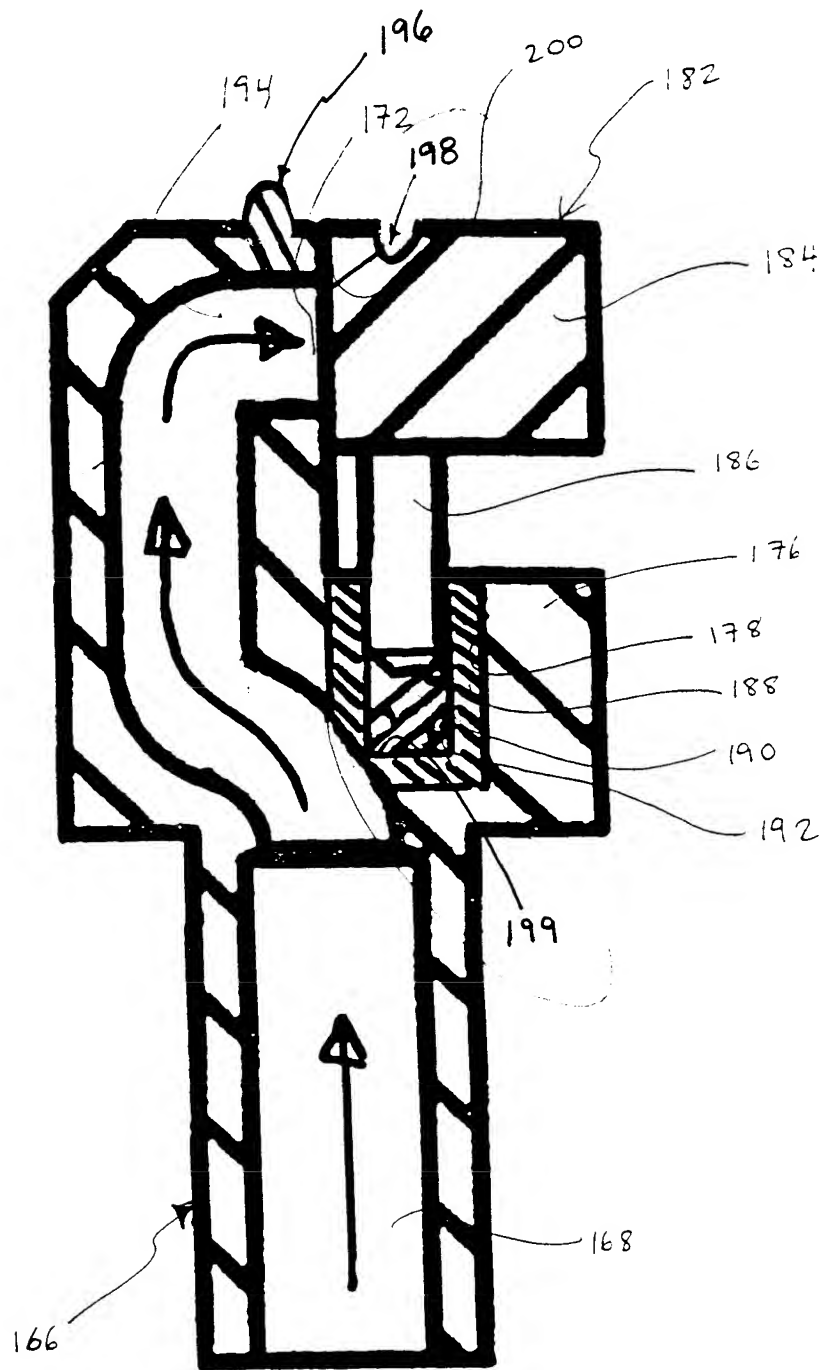


Figure 7

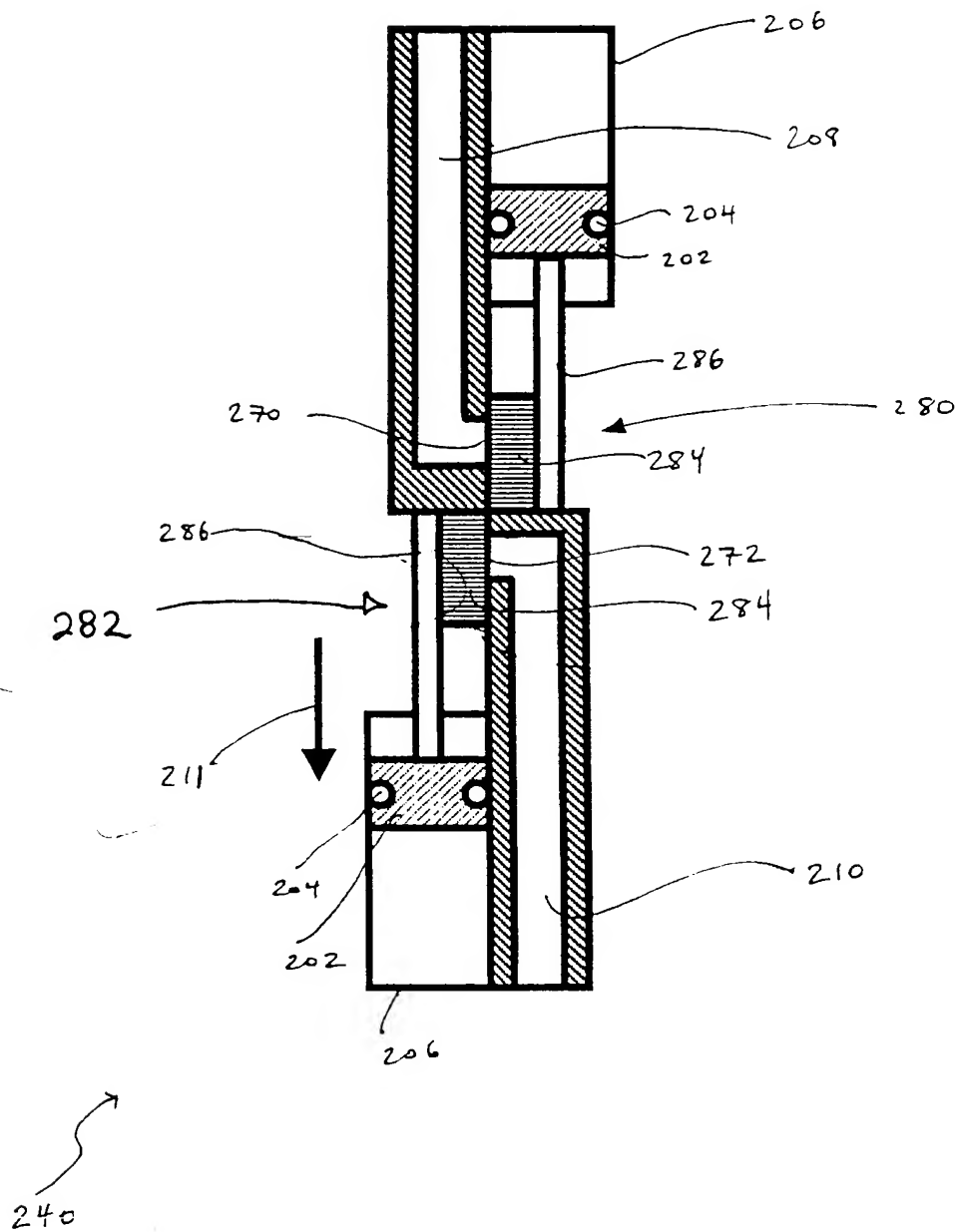


Figure 8